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District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **FLAGSTAFF MAN ARRESTED IN "HOAX" BOMB CASE**

Flagstaff, AZ — Rene Robert Montoya, 36, of Flagstaff, AZ was arrested March 9, 2007, on charges of False Information and Hoaxes in connection with the placement of a hoax bomb in a mail receptacle. Montoya had his initial appearance before U.S. Magistrate Judge Mark E. Aspey in Flagstaff.

On March 5, 2007, a U.S. Postal Service letter carrier was delivering mail to cluster boxes at 1450 West Kaibab Lane when he noticed what appeared to be three sticks of dynamite taped together and wired to the front door of box number 34. The carrier immediately contacted Postal Inspectors and called 911. Arizona Department of Public Safety Bomb Technicians responded and determined the device was three road flares taped together and did not contain a triggering device.

The owner of box number 34 was identified as Rene Robert Montoya. Flagstaff Police Department and Special Agents from the Bureaus of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms interviewed Montoya initially and followed leads he provided. Information obtained in interviews lead Postal Inspectors and Flagstaff Police Department Detectives to re-interview Montoya as a possible suspect. During a subsequent interview, Montoya admitted to placing the device inside his mailbox.

"This arrest is consistent with our mission to protect postal employees and the American public from criminal misuse of the mail system," said Oscar Villanueva, Inspector in Charge, Los Angeles Division of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. "Postal Inspectors take the safety of the mails very seriously and aggressively investigate reports of suspicious items in the mail system or on Postal Service property."

Chief Brent Cooper, of the Flagstaff Police Department stated, "This is another example of how several law enforcement agencies can and do work together". He added, "Any threat involving potentially explosive material is treated as a serious crime. We appreciate the cooperation from the responding agencies as well as the residents at the scene."

A conviction for False Information and Hoaxes carries a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment, a fine or both. In general, the court, in imposing a sentence on a defendant who has been convicted of this offense, can order the defendant to reimburse any state or local government, incurring expenses incident to any emergency or investigative response to that conduct.

An arrest is simply a method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The investigation was conducted by Postal Inspectors from the United States Postal Inspection Service and Detectives from the Flagstaff Police Department. The prosecution is being handled by Joseph J. Lodge, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Flagstaff.

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